THE DICKENSIAN

A Magazine for Dickens Lovers
and Monthly Record of the Dickens Fellowship

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WHEN FOUND——

WITH the present number of *The Dickensian* is completed the first year of its existence, and it is very gratifying to be able to say that its success has been greater than was ever anticipated. There were many who hinted that there would be great difficulty in filling its pages and keeping up the interest in it for longer than three months. The difficulty so far has been to use a tithe of valuable contributions and pictures which have been, and continue to be, offered. So numerous have these been that if no more were to be sent for some months to come, the pages would easily be filled throughout the coming year. To those who have been so generous in this respect the Editor begs to offer his grateful thanks.

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One of the attractions of the first year has been the adaptation of the original covers of the novelist's books to those of the issues of the magazine. And next year arrangements have been made to maintain the interest in this respect by the use of another series of cover designs, perhaps less familiar than the last.

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When Mr. Cuming Walters wrote his "clues" to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, he could have had no idea that it was destined to create the excitement it has. Everybody seems now busy on a solution, and if we were to publish all the literature on the subject which is dropped stealthily or otherwise into our letter-box, we should require to considerably increase the number of our pages. The publication of Mr. Andrew Lang's book has further stimulated the craze, and we should think nearly every character in the book has been proved beyond doubt to be Datchery. Almost the only exceptions we can call to mind are Mrs. Crisparkle and the Deputy. The literature on the subject is becoming extensive. During the last month, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Mr. Walter Harries Pollock, the *Times* critic, and Mr. Cuming Walters himself, have contributed long and argumentative articles on the theme to the daily Press, whilst Mr. Luke Fildes, who illustrated the book, sent a letter to the *Times*, which we reproduce on another page.

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But the interest and excitement in the mystery are not to end with these solutions. It has already been announced that Mr. Comyns Carr is dramatizing the book for Mr. Tree. What Mr. Carr's solution will be, time alone must reveal. He has not only to solve the mystery, but to furnish a conclusion. Whatever line he takes in these respects,

there will be a strong part in "Jasper," which we may assume Mr. Tree will fill. Doubtless there were many "Drood" plays shortly after Dickens's death put on the stage. One of these was published, but is now, we believe, very scarce. It was by Walter Stephens, and was produced at the Surrey Theatre. In it Neville Landless was "Datchery." Mr. Henry Neville played the part of "Jasper."

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An interesting and suggestive letter was received by the secretary of the Notts branch from Mr. Bransby Williams last month, on the occasion of his visit to that town. The text of it will be found in the report from the branch in another part of this issue, and we commend it to members of the Fellowship and to our readers generally.

* * *

The library for the blind which the Portsmouth branch of the Fellowship established some time back, has now been removed to the Dickens museum, under the care of Mr. Clemenson, the curator there. Hitherto it was in the care of Mrs. Maggs, from whose house and under whose kindly supervision the books were distributed. The library was greatly appreciated by the sightless, and so welcomed was it that the books were soon read and re-read. Any reader therefore who is disposed to add a volume or two can feel assured they will be gratefully accepted.

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The Dickens Fellowship is making a new departure in January, by holding a dance at the Caxton Hall, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W., on 3 January. The chief object is to bring members into closer companionship with each other—a consummation that is not altogether possible at the usual large and formal monthly meetings. It is to be hoped that the venture will be a success. Dancing will commence at 7.30, and will continue till midnight. Tickets are on sale at headquarters, at the following prices, which include refreshments: Members, 1s. 6d.; double, 2s. 6d.; non-members, 2s. 6d.; double, 4s. Members are asked to pay for admission in order to cover the inevitable additional expenditure.

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The Council of the Fellowship are making efforts to start a Leyton and District branch to take the place of the late Walthamstow branch. With that end in view, a meeting is to be held in the Wesleyan Schoolroom, High Road, Leyton, on 11 December, at 7.30 p.m., when Mr. Watson Thornton will give his popular lecture-recital, "Scenes and Characters from Charles Dickens," and the necessary business will be transacted during an interval. Admission will be free.

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The cover design of the present number is a reproduction of that drawn by Charles Alston Collins for the original issue of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which has been so much in evidence during the last month or two.

THE EDITOR.

CHRISTMAS IN DICKENS-LAND

A REVERIE

By J. W. T. LEY

"There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas."—*Sketches by Boz.*

IT is a platitude that "the old-fashioned Christmas is a thing of the past." But is it altogether true? It was true in 1837. The great Apostle of Christmas, as Charles Dickens has, with justice, been called, said in his heading to that delightful "good-humoured Christmas chapter" in *Pickwick*, that the good customs therein recorded are "not quite so religiously kept up in these degenerate days." But are we to say that his life's work has been wasted? Are we to say that the world has forgotten the lesson he taught in *Sketches by Boz*, in *Pickwick*, in the Christmas Books, in *Household Words*, and in *All the Year Round*? Surely not! Surely Christmas is with us, as it was with Scrooge's nephew, "a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time . . . when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys"?

"There is a magic in the very name of Christmas." Verily there is. Have you ever in your imagination spent half an hour in the company of the children of the master's brain? I have done so, often. Let us see them celebrating the season of goodwill.

It is the spacious but cosy parlour of an inn. "The walls and ceiling are hung with living green, from every part of which the bright, gleaming berries glisten. The crisp leaves of holly and mistletoe and ivy reflect back the light, as if so many little mirrors have been scattered here," and a mighty blaze goes roaring up the chimney. Here they are; all assembled round the festive board; as bright a company as man could wish to behold. Mr. Pickwick occupies the post of honour. He is at the head of the table, and his kind eyes beam with delight as he looks around him and sees nothing but joyous faces. Who is that seated opposite to him—that stout, jovial, elderly gentleman? Why, who else should it be but our dear old friend Wardle? Yes, there he is; happy and good-tempered as of yore. His face is a very picture of happiness as his eyes fall upon his two daughters, Isabella and Emily, seated by the sides of their respective husbands—Mr. Trundle and Mr. Snodgrass. At Mr. Pickwick's right hand is Miss Betsey Trotwood (the one I love best of all this glorious company). She still has that austere appearance which we know so well; but as she looks around the table her glance lights upon David Copperfield and his noble wife Agnes, and her face becomes softened, whilst I fancy a tear rolls down her cheek. At any rate, she takes her spectacles off, and vigorously rubs them with her pocket handkerchief.

Mr. Dick is at David's side, and in response to a question from Dr. Strong, who, with his good young wife Annie, sits opposite, remarks that he hopes before long to have the memorial completed, though he has not yet quite mastered the difficulty of keeping King Charles's head out of the document. That truest of friends, Tommy Traddles, is in the company, and, of course, "the dearest girl in the world" is at his

elbow. Mr. Toots is close by, with a black-eyed, vivacious little woman, who, he assures John Westlock, is "a most remarkable woman." John Westlock, by the way, looks happy, as he introduces to John Jarndyce that best of little women, Ruth. And well he may be happy, for surely if any man in this wide world is to be envied, he is that man. And Mr. Jarndyce, as he exchanges jokes with Wardle, constantly assures his whilom housekeeper, Esther, that the wind has veered round from the east to the west. See, there is our old friend Wilkins Micawber. His face is another picture of perfect contentment, and his conviviality even infuses cheerfulness into Mrs. Nickleby, who informs him that she is reminded by this gathering of a family party years ago, which she particularly remembers, because on that occasion her boy Nicholas suffered the consequences of eating too much plum pudding. In her anxiety, she goes on to say, she summoned the doctor, who came in a new coach, which she distinctly remembers, because its wheels, which were round, were painted yellow. Arthur Clennam is present, with his pure-souled wife Amy. Mr. F——'s aunt, who has overheard Mrs. Nickleby's reminiscences, remarks to Flora Finching, with, perhaps, just a little more reason than her remarks may be credited with generally, "You can't put brains into a brass knob"; to which Mrs. Nickleby, apparently totally failing to discern any application of the remark, vouchsafes no answer.

Have I overlooked Tom Pinch? He is here; of course he is—the same dear old simple Tom that used to keep house with his sister at Islington. He is all smiles now, and he is cracking his jokes, Tom is, just as he was one famous morning when he and Ruth were surprised by the arrival of a certain visitor. And the "lean mummer," Jingle, is at the table, as welcome a member of the company as is Joe Gargery, who is struck with something like awe when introduced to David Copperfield, and whispers to Pip that before Mr. Copperfield could write books he had to learn his alphabet, just as had the King upon his throne before he could write his Acts of Parliament in print. Kind-hearted Dick Swiveller is seated at the table with a young lady, whom he introduces to Mrs. Todgers as "the Marchioness," and whom he informs that the "old min is frindly" nowadays. And Bob Cratchit and all the Cratchits; and Dr. Marigold; and Walter Gay and his brave wife; and Prince Turveydrop and his wife; and the man with a mouth like a post office, John Wemmick; and "the cherub," and the "Boofer Lady" and her husband; and honest "Noddy" Boffin and his partner (who justifies her husband's assertion to Mr. Dick that she is "a highflyer at fashion"); and Tony Weller; and Kate Nickleby; and Dolly Varden (whose lips are as kissable as ever); and Newman Noggs; and Lucie Manette; and Mr. and Mrs. Meagles, with Tattycoram; and honest John Peerybingle and his Dot and carry—(I was nearly doing what John himself only just avoided); and Captain Cuttle—all these are here, and many more. Bob Sawyer and Ben Allen are holding an animated conversation, of which, however, only a few odd words, such as "legs," "brains," "capital subject," are distinguishable. Mr. Winkle is seated by the side of a charming, black-eyed little woman whom we used to know as Arabella Allen.

Do you recognize the waiters? Never were there more jolly and

attentive waiters. Sam Weller, standing behind his master's chair, is in his very best form, and keeps the Fat Boy, who is at the other end of the table (and who, by the way, is awake), in a constant state of terror with his awful grimaces; while, in response to Mr. Pickwick's request for "Just a little more beef, Sam," he says, "A little goes a long way, sir, as the nursemaid said when she dropped the baby over the Monument railings." Mark Tapley, the very picture of jollity, has very good reason for asserting, as he does in an undertone to Sam, that "there ain't no

DICKENS INVOKING THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

From a drawing by Kyd, kindly lent by Messrs. Maurice and Co., of Bedford Street, W.C.

credit in bein' jolly in such company." Bailey junior, since his announcement that "the wittles is hup," has been on his best behaviour.

And now the dinner is over, and Mr. Micawber is asked to brew a bowl of punch. As he complies with the request, his face wears a

smile of perfectly ecstatic enjoyment. As the steaming mixture is handed round, the merriment increases, and every one enthusiastically drinks to Dick Swiveller's toast, "May the fire of soul be kindled at the taper of conwiviality, and may the wing of friendship never moult a feather." Mr. Pickwick makes a speech. There he stands, as he did when we first made his acquaintance, with one hand gracefully placed behind his back, and the other outstretched. The only differences are that he does not stand on a chair, and that he holds a glass of punch in his outstretched hand. His words are so drowned by the constant applause that we cannot catch them properly, but he concludes by wishing every one "fifty more Christmases at least in this world, and eternal summers in another." He is followed by Wardle, and he, in his turn, by Mr. Micawber, who takes the opportunity to tell the company that, after waiting for a considerable period, something has at last turned up, and that he entertains confident expectations that before many days have elapsed, he will be in a position to dispose of any obligations that he may be under to Mr. Traddles, and to the friend and companion of his youth, Copperfield.

Mr. Wardle is called upon for a song, and after informing the company that his voice is not what it once was, sings in his own hearty manner his favourite, "A Christmas Carol." And the company lustily take up the refrain—

> But my song I troll out for Christmas stout,
> The hearty, the true, and the bold ;
> A bumper I drain, and with might and main
> Give three cheers for this Christmas old.

Tom Pinch accompanies him on the piano. Others follow, even Sam Weller being pressed into the service, and telling the company about Bold Turpin, who

> . . . vunce on Hounslow Heath,
> His brown mare Bess, bestrode—er,

whilst two of the most popular numbers are songs by Master Micawber and by Caleb Plummer, who sings about "the sparkling bowl."

And so the merry hours pass. Everybody is determined to be happy, and to make everybody else happy. Never was there a more light-hearted and good-tempered company. Not a single discord. By and by the tables and chairs are pushed back to make room for Sir Roger. "Now the music strikes up, and the dance commences. The bright fire crackles and sparkles, rises and falls, as though it joins the dance itself in right good fellowship. Sometimes it roars as if it would make music too. Sometimes it sports with the holly boughs, and, shining on the leaves by fits and starts, makes them look as though they were in the cold winter night again and fluttering in the wind. Sometimes its genial humour grows obstreperous and passes all bounds, and then it casts into the room, among the twinkling feet, with a loud burst, a shower of harmless little sparks, and in its exultation leaps and bounds like a mad thing by the broad cold chimney." Mr. Pickwick leads off with Miss Betsey Trotwood. "Top couple, too, with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them, three or four and twenty pair of partners, people who are not to be trifled with, people who *will* dance and have no notion of walking." They are followed by Mr. Wardle and his mother, who goes through the numerous steps,

if not with the same agility as she did sixty years ago, with the same buoyant spirits. Mr. Micawber, whose happiness seems to be constantly on the increase, leads out his life's partner; Mr. Tupman dances with Mrs. Nickleby; Sam Weller joins the revels with Mary, the pretty housemaid, for his partner; so does Mark Tapley, with Mrs. Lupin: and so does Bailey junior, with Tilly Slowboy; whilst Scrooge, who has vied all the evening with Tackleton for the honour of being the jolliest of the company, leads out his pretty niece, and as he goes through the mazes of the dance, his legs seem to wink, even as did those of Fezziwig on a never-to-be-forgotten Christmas Eve. Only one sits out, and he, poor little chap, is lame. Yes, Tiny Tim sits alone in the chimney-corner; but there is no sign of discontent on his face, and he enters into the fun as heartily as does Sam Weller—"and that ain't sayin' a little, neither."

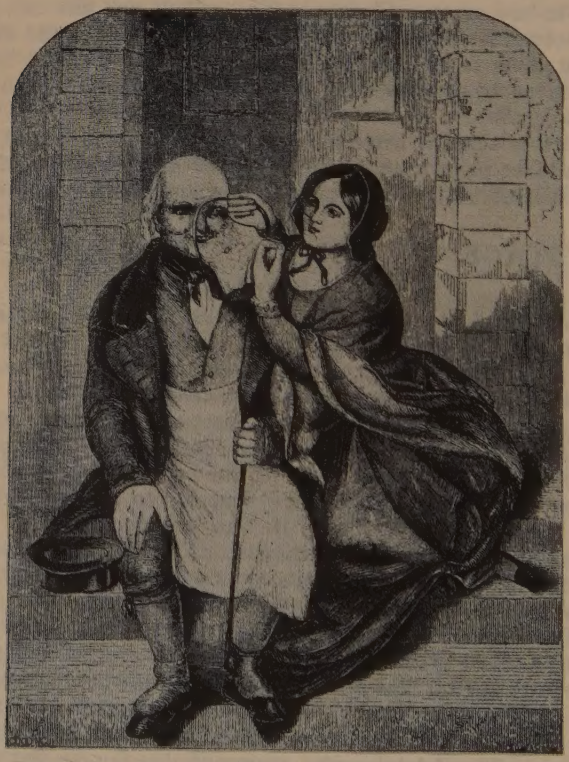
And so we reluctantly leave them. It is good to meet old friends, and assuredly we have been in the company of very dear old friends to-night. Blessed be the memory of him who gave them to us.

A STAGE VERSION OF "THE CHIMES"

By ARTHUR W. À'BECKETT

THE CHIMES has always had a peculiar fascination for me, as it was one of the stories that my father, the late Gilbert Abbott à'Beckett, metropolitan police magistrate, dramatist and journalist, adapted at the request of Charles Dickens for the stage. It was written in 1844, when *Punch* was three years old and Mark Lemon, its earliest editor, or (as some people assert) joint editor, was associated with his colleague in the conversion of the "goblin story of some bells that rang an old year out and a new year in" to a stage play. As I write the version is before me. It was produced at the Adelphi Theatre on Tuesday, 19 December, 1844. I cannot say I recollect its inauguration, as I was at the time only six weeks old. But looking through the list of the *dramatis personæ*, I find a number of very familiar names. The Prologue (the spirit of *The Chimes*) was played by Miss E. Chaplin, a niece of Charles Kean, a lady who a little later was to make her mark in the "juvenile lead" in the famous Shakespearean revivals at the Royal Princess's Theatre. Toby Veck was entrusted to O. Smith. This choice surprises me, as the actor had a reputation for stage villainy. The Adelphi sixty years ago was famous for its melodrama, and O. Smith was, usually the representative of vice, allowed to be triumphant during four acts of the piece, to be vanquished by virtue in the fifth. Then Alderman Cute was given to the leading low comedian, Mr. Wright, the predecessor of my dear old friend, J. L. Toole, in the same "line of business" in the same house. I find that there is a connecting link between Wright and Toole in the representative of Sir Joseph Bowley, Bart., M.P., Paul Bedford. It was the duty (as a rule) for Bedford to act as a foil to Wright, and he performed the same useful office to every one's favourite "Johnny" Toole. Richard was played by Selby, who was one of the "stock authors" at the Adelphi ever ready to "adapt from the French." Fish was entrusted to C. J. Smith, a clever little fellow who made a big hit when Jefferson

appeared at the same house in Dion Boucicault's version of *Rip Van Winkle*. Cullenford, who appeared as Choker, subsequently migrated to the Haymarket Theatre, where he became a member of the stock company headed first by Benjamin Webster, and subsequently by Buckstone. The best-known actress in the troupe was Mrs. Frank Matthews, who played Mrs. Chickenstalker. *The Chimes* was divided into four quarters or acts. The first scene showed the belfry close to the house of Alderman Cute. A band of "original Tivoli professors"



TROTTY VECK AND MEG
From a drawing by W. Denby in *The People's Journal*, 1845

were engaged in playing "I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls," the famous ballad from Balfe's *Bohemian Girl*, an opera then in the freshness of its youth. Jacob, the head of the "street musicianers" (German bands had yet to be imported), invites his colleagues to go down to a house round the corner. "They're werry partial to 'Marble Halls,' if you give it 'em with inflections," says he, adding that "he'll be down in time for the polka." This last was a measure that was rapidly becoming popular. It was a far more complicated affair than the present figure, and included a slide and kick something after the fashion of the barn dance of to-day, or rather yesterday. *The Chimes*

was the second of Dickens's Christmas stories, following upon the *Christmas Carol*, published in 1843. Both booklets (to use a word recently coined) were published by Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, then the intimate friends of the author, and the two *Punch* men—Mark Lemon and Gilbert Abbott à Beckett—to whom the dramatization had been entrusted. In the preface to the edition of the Christmas Books, published in 1850, Charles Dickens wrote: "My purpose was, in a whimsical kind of masque, which the good humour of the season justified, to awaken some forgiving and forbearing thoughts never out of season in a Christian land." The story of *The Chimes* pointed the moral that we must trust and hope, and neither doubt ourselves nor the good in one another.

The Chimes was composed much on the same lines as the *Christmas Carol*, and was once again a whimsical kind of masque, the goblin of the *Bells* supplying the place occupied by Christmas Past, Present, and to Come. In the third story of the series, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, dramatized by Dion Boucicault, Dickens got away from fairy-land into the workaday world pure and simple. Reading *The Chimes* one cannot help being struck by the similarity of the situation of to-day to the situation of sixty years ago. We have still our poor and our unemployed. But where is our Dickens?

It has occurred to me that *The Chimes* could be very well dramatized once again, and I have taken the task in hand. It will be a labour of love. With the materials before me I have the opportunity of representing the story in the dramatic form that would have met with the approbation of its author. I have noticed that the Dickens Fellowship has its Amateur Dramatic Club. It may be that *The Chimes* will be too serious an undertaking for amateurs, although in the *Masque of Flowers* (which I produced at Gray's Inn, as Master of the Revels, in 1887) amateurs came well to the front, as actors, singers, and dancers.

"THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH

A FAIRY TALE OF HOME"

IT is the time of gentle thoughts and words,
When voices that make music in the ear
(As do the love-notes of sweet-throated birds),
Are speaking the old welcomes, trite, yet dear:
And folk, made happy by their Christmas cheer,
Tell o'er the names of friends in bygone times,
And sing old songs such as their sires did hear,
Until the carols mingle with the chimes.
At such a time thou comest, little book!
And find'st a welcome waiting everywhere:
The gorgeous chamber and the chimney nook,
The SPIRIT of thy leaves is asked to share,
As though he were a guest expected there,
And coming with an honoured kinsman's claim—
Such a "familiar face" he seems to wear—
And such a household word doth sound his name.

Douglas Jerrold's *Shilling Magazine*, January, 1846.

A "BOZ" BIRTHDAY BOOK*

By J. CUMING WALTERS

AUTHOR OF "CLUES TO DICKENS'S MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD," ETC.

I HAVE reproduced at the foot of the page the full title page of this tastefully produced volume for a special reason. It is almost a commentary, and it is decidedly a recommendation in itself. The dear familiar "Boz" leads to pleasant anticipations of the results of intimate acquaintance, and these anticipations are fulfilled. What, too, could be more fitting and more felicitous than that a volume so agreeable to the desires of good Dickensians should emanate from the General Secretary of the Fellowship? He is a "choice spirit," as Dick Swiveller would say, and we obtain an initial understanding that we may repose complete confidence in the loving devotion and the scrupulous care with which he will carry out a self-assigned labour. The Index makes a new and valuable feature in compilations, for birthday books are but too frequently unsystematic and formless, and, as works of general reference, hopelessly impracticable. Finally, what could be more appropriate and assuring than the imprint of Dickens's own publishers? Their imprimatur is a testimonial in itself.

It has often seemed to me in examining birthday books that the compilers have chiefly succeeded in making their author look foolish. A detached phrase, never intended to stand alone as wisdom or philosophy, is put forth as a monument, whereas it is only revealed as a molehill. Mr. Ley has avoided this error. No compilation can be beyond criticism, and no selection can be perfect; but after careful examination of Mr. Ley's seven hundred and more extracts I have the feeling, the conviction, that these passages, almost without exception, stand firmly on their merits. They are concrete in their wisdom, their sentiment, and their humour; they are typical of the author's genius, and they embody his favourite ideas and the essence of his teaching.

By a happy and judicious arrangement Mr. Ley differentiates between Dickens, when expressing his thoughts, and the characters of his creation when uttering theirs. Herein this Birthday Book excels most of its class, where jumbled quotations give no exact hint given of their derivation. It would, for example, be unfair to quote some striking observation of Micawber's or Pecksniff's and leave us in doubt as to its origin; on the other hand, by naming the actual speaker, Mr. Ley contrives to give us in the selected passage an illumination of that speaker's character. Often, too, he allows Dickens to address us direct, and he has culled some rare flowers from letters and addresses as well as from the books. "The form of religion does not so greatly matter if we try to do good" was a dictum of his own, a message from his heart.

There is one other feature of the volume it were graceless to omit mentioning. The Dedicatory Preface is inscribed to Mr. B. W. Matz, who, in his double capacity as Editor of *The Dickensian* and as first Hon. General Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship—to say nothing of

* *The Boz Birthday Book.* Compiled by J. W. T. Ley, Hon. General Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship. With an Index to Subjects and Portrait of Charles Dickens. London: Chapman and Hall. 3s. 6d. net.

his lifelong interest in and devotion to Dickens and his works—fully deserves the enthusiastic words which Mr. Ley bestows upon him. I might be tempted to dilate upon this, but that I fear the fate that befell the author of *Somebody's Luggage*, whose complimentary parenthesis was "editorially struck out." *The Boz Birthday Book* should be conspicuously in evidence for many years to come. It is at once a textbook and a tribute.

THE MYSTERIES OF EDWIN DROOD

By LUKE FILDES, R.A.

THE following important and interesting letter from Mr. Luke Fildes, the illustrator of *Edwin Drood*, appeared in *The Times* of 3 November, a comment upon which appears on another page of this issue in the form of a letter from Mr. J. Cumming Walters:—

SIR,—In an article entitled "The Mysteries of Edwin Drood" in your issue of to-day, the writer, speculating on the various theories advanced as solutions of the mystery, ventures to say:—

> Nor do we attach much importance to any of the hints Dickens dropped, whether to John Forster, to any member of his family, or to either of his illustrators. He was very anxious that his secret should not be guessed, and the hints which he dropped may very well have been intentionally misleading.

I know Charles Dickens was very anxious that his secret should not be guessed, but it surprises me to read that he could be thought capable of the deceit so lightly attributed to him.

The "hints he dropped" to me, his sole illustrator—for Charles Collins, his son-in-law, only designed the green cover for the monthly parts, and Collins told me he did not in the least know the significance of the various groups in the design; that they were drawn from instructions personally given by Charles Dickens and not from any text—these "hints" to me were the outcome of a request of mine that he would explain some matters, the meaning of which I could not comprehend and which were for me, his illustrator, embarrassingly hidden.

I instanced in the printers' rough proof of the monthly part sent to me to illustrate where he particularly described John Jasper as wearing a neckerchief of such dimensions as to go twice around his neck; I called his attention to the circumstance that I had previously dressed Jasper as wearing a little black tie once round the neck, and I asked him if he had any special reasons for the alteration of Jasper's attire, and, if so, I submitted I ought to know. He, Dickens, appeared for a moment to be disconcerted by my remark, and said something meaning he was afraid he was "getting on too fast" and revealing more than he meant at that early stage, and after a short silence, cogitating, he suddenly said, "Can you keep a secret?" I assured him he could rely on me. He then said, "I must have the double necktie! It is necessary, for Jasper strangles Edwin Drood with it."

I was impressed by his earnestness, as, indeed, I was at all my interviews with him—also by the confidence which he said he reposed in me, trusting that I would not in any way refer to it, as he feared even a chance remark might find its way into the "papers" and thus anticipate his "mystery"; and it is a little startling, after more than thirty-five years of profound belief in the nobility of character and sincerity of Charles Dickens, to be told now that he probably was more or less of a humbug on such occasions.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,

HARROGATE, *Oct.* 27. LUKE FILDES.

THE HISTORY OF A MYSTERY

A REVIEW OF THE SOLUTIONS TO "EDWIN DROOD"

By GEORGE F. GADD

CHAPTER VII

MINOR CONTRIBUTIONS

IT is now necessary to retrace our steps a little in order to fully cover the period separating Proctor's earliest "loving study" from his final volume, *Watched by the Dead*.

Reference was made in the last chapter to a contribution in *The Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1884, entitled "The Mystery of Edwin Drood: Suggestions for a Conclusion." This purports to be written from the point of view of a reader, on internal evidence only, and, as the first attempt to solve the problem in accordance with Forster's statement, it calls for some consideration at our hands, quite apart from the circumstance that Proctor specially selected it for attack. A considerable portion of the article is devoted to the superfluous question of Jasper's guilt, but, having established that proposition to his complete satisfaction, the author proceeds to consider the more subtle difficulties of the plot. The sole mystery, we are told, lies in the method of concealing the crime. Jasper contrives to obtain the Sapsea key while in temporary possession of Durdles's bundle, and either takes a cast then and there, or substitutes a false key, with which he may have come prepared. "If the substituted key," says the theorist, "were not precisely similar to the real one, it would not open the tomb, which would be all the more advantageous to Jasper." In what way the inevitable detection of such a fraud would benefit the choirmaster's plans is not at all clear, and the writer does not explain further. Lime, of course, is placed in the tomb, and the strangled Edwin is cast into it. Datchery, who, as "Gillan Vase" suspected, is a professional detective in the employ of Grewgious, prevails upon the opium woman to permit his presence at the den on the occasion of Jasper's next orgy, and the gallant Mr. Tartar, in sailor rig, likewise attends to furnish additional proof. As in *John Jasper's Secret*, the criminal unwittingly discloses his crime before interested company, whereupon a search for the body is instituted, and pursued with the aid of the stonemason's peculiar faculty for discovery. The stones of the betrothal ring are found and identified by Grewgious and Bazzard; the chain of evidence is completed by Durdles, Deputy, Puffer, and others, and Jasper is brought to justice. All the principal characters fare according to Forster, excepting Neville, who is allowed to live and "begin the world anew."

Early in 1885 a well-known paper, *The Weekly Budget*, included in its contents the opening chapters of a serial tale by Mrs. C. A. Read, called *The Welfleet Mystery*. According to the preface, "the story may be termed an outgrowth of Dickens's last work. The first half necessarily follows the plot of *Edwin Drood* very closely, although it has been the writer's aim to vary the characters, incidents, and conversations, so that they may not seem simply a tame repetition to those who have read the great master's work."

Certainly tameness is not an obvious failing of this production. If one might judge from the rude illustration of Welfleet Cathedral and

graveyard on a moonlight night—with John Knight (Jasper) muffled, like Monks, in a long cloak, and listening in apparent dismay to the inopportune pleadings of a mysterious female who is certainly not the Puffer—one might be disposed to consider the story of a very wild and thrilling character indeed. The text, too, reminds one of the cheap sensational literature of the time rather than recalls the mature work of our great novelist. All the familiar figures of the original story revel, in these pages, in a complete change of name, and their personal characteristics are distorted, perhaps in accord with that circumstance.

In September, 1887, the *Belgravia Magazine* returned to the subject, but this time the celebrated mystery was employed for the purposes of a short story. *Mystery on Mystery*, by Edward Salmon, is the supposed narration of an author of recognized "Dickensesque" powers, who is editorially commissioned to write a conclusion. He accepts, but is deterred from his task by the appearance of Dickens's ghost, which utters a solemn protest. How little Mr. Salmon's author penetrated into the real mystery is evident from the statement that at the end of a week's study he had "spotted" the murderer, and discovered where the body was hidden. To "spot" the criminal is no great feat. As Mr. Marzials says in his *Life of Dickens:* "Guilty, guilty, most certainly guilty. Let the judge put on the black cap and Jasper be devoted to his merited doom."

CHAPTER VIII

FINAL CLUES

WHETHER *Watched by the Dead* was generally regarded as a satisfactory solution, or whether public interest and individual ingenuity alike declined after that work appeared, the fact remains that for many years no further attempt was made to revive the subject of this alluring problem. The smithy which had so long resounded to the ring of hammer on anvil, as links were forged to complete the unfinished chain, became silent and dark. The links themselves, powerless to "hold and drag," lay neglected, and almost forgotten, all of them covered with the rust of time, and many well-nigh hidden beneath the dust of obscurity.

Nevertheless, further work remained to be done. In June of the present year Mr. J. Cuming Walters published his now well-known little book in green covers, *Clues to Dickens's Mystery of Edwin Drood*, setting forth therein an entirely new theory. This solution, at once surprising in its nature and admirable in its presentment, fully admits the Forster explanation of Dickens's intentions, and at the same time furnishes abundant evidence of the novelty and ingenuity which were promised by the great author at the outset of the story. It is a noteworthy fact that the first serious inquirers into the mystery handled the very thread or clue which Mr. Walters has operated so successfully; and it is, perhaps, still more strange that the two deductions should be so widely different.

Readers of *Edwin Drood* will freely admit that the seventh chapter of that work gives a vivid impression of the character of Helena Landless. Her past history and present demeanour are set forth in detail too clear to be lightly disregarded. The authors of *John Jasper's*

Secret, a sequel now nearly thirty-five years old, duly noted Helena's early essays in male impersonation, and dispatched her, once more in boy's attire, to Jasper's opium haunt in London. Mr. Walters sees in Miss Landless the capacity for a much more difficult task, and is firmly of opinion that he has laid his hand upon the real Mr. Datchery, white wig and all. With the double motive of protecting Rosa, and of vindicating the fair fame of her brother, Helena thus establishes an unsuspected watch on Jasper's movements, and, having accumulated her share of the evidence, contrives to lure the criminal to the scene of his evil deed, as suggested by the most significant of the cover illustrations. Mr. Walters conceives that Neville Landless receives his death-blow whilst protecting his sister, and so gives Jasper a double claim to the gallows.

It is no part of our present purpose to enter into details which are readily accessible to all, but a few words of criticism will be in keeping with the methods we have adopted throughout this review.

The most important objection to be offered is, of course, the enormous difficulty of such an assumption as is suggested. It certainly requires the exercise of considerable imagination to picture a young and lovely girl successfully masquerading as an elderly man. But the standard of real life should not be applied too inflexibly. Probably no one ever succeeded in evading detection by the stage device of a false beard hooked round the ears, yet we have Rokesmith, in *Our Mutual Friend*, donning and doffing an oakum wig and whiskers with facility and security.

But if we are to admit Mr. Walters's theory, we ought to know why Datchery, "alone and unobserved," was apparently unable to find Mrs. Tope's, notwithstanding the "fatally precise" directions of the Crozier waiter. Tope was the verger, well-known in the city. Helena had lived for six months in Cloisterham, and must have been as fully aware of the situation of Tope's and Jasper's as of the cathedral itself. We ought also to be able to explain why Datchery rushed into Jasper's presence so impatiently, as though courting detection. One would think that Helena would postpone a meeting with the enemy until she and others were familiarized with her disguised self. Further, it behoves us to inquire whether Miss Landless would not greatly fear a disastrous meeting with Mr. Crisparkle, and, finally, whether Datchery was wise to impress upon Cloisterham his determination to "settle" in the city, knowing that frequent journeys must be taken to the country of the Magic Beanstalk.

To all these queries Mr. Walters may be able to furnish satisfactory answers. Meanwhile we take leave of his little work with the firm conviction that it marks the high-water level of Drood solutions, and is deserving of unstinted praise.

After a preliminary canter in the pages of *Longman's Magazine* for September, Mr. Andrew Lang seated himself more firmly on the Drood hobby-horse by the issue, in October, of a small volume of argument in opposition to that of his immediate predecessor. *The Puzzle of Dickens's Last Plot* claims to be an endorsement of Proctor's theory—with variations. It may seem ironical to congratulate the author upon a variation which goes far to overset the theory. Nevertheless Mr. Lang

has knocked away the strongest prop of his adopted solutionist by means of a discovery of the first importance. It has hitherto been supposed that the extraordinary attitude of Grewgious towards Jasper at the memorable interview after Drood's disappearance is only explainable on the assumption of Edwin's return to life; but now a new and sufficient reason is apparent. "I have just left Miss Landless," says the old lawyer pointedly, and we wonder how it is that the keen Proctor and others after him failed to note so significant a remark. Rosa, we know, had been reticent with her guardian, but Grewgious could learn from Helena sufficient to make him suspect the possibility of worse behind. The angular man disclosed to Jasper a piece of news, and this now stands out vividly, not as the beginning of Drood's scheme of punishment, but as *an ingenious test of Jasper's guilt.* Taken by surprise, the criminal fell, and the worst suspicions of Grewgious were realized. Mr. Lang vigorously attacks other difficulties, but, like Proctor, he cannot satisfactorily patch the great flaw of Neville's abandonment to the execration of the world. It will not do to say that Edwin could not come forward until his evidence was complete. He had no need to "come forward." A word in Neville's ear would have changed despair into joy; but that word was certainly never spoken.

At the eleventh hour, information reaches the writer concerning a unique solution, properly belonging to the early days when *The Cloven Foot* made its appearance in America. About six months after the death of Dickens, there was produced, at the Surrey Theatre, London, a drama in four acts, by Mr. Walter Stephens, bearing the same title as the work on which it is founded. The author, by means of free transposition, managed to condense into the compass of a few scenes all the important features of the half-told tale. The tragic event of the play is brought about within the gloomy vaults of the cathedral, where Datchery and Durdles witness Jasper's efforts to cast Rosa into the pit containing Drood's remains. The Buffer effects a timely rescue, and when he removes his wig, we are surprised to find that Neville Landless has been working out his own deliverance. Jasper takes a large dose of opium, and, as officers enter to apprehend him, he falls —presumably to slow music.

THE END.

NOTE.—Grateful acknowledgments for valuable assistance rendered in the collection of material for the above review are due to Messrs. W. Miller, B. W. Matz, J. T. Page, George Schneider, and A. Humphreys.

CALENDAR OF DICKENS QUOTATIONS

COMPILED BY "OLD FLEET"

Dec. 1.—"It is incumbent upon all people in an exalted position . . . to make themselves respected."—*Little Dorrit*—Mr. Dorrit.

Dec. 2.—"That there are classes which, if rightly treated, constitute strength, and if wrongly, weakness, I hold it impossible to deny."—*Speech at Birmingham.*

Dec. 3.—"(Father Time)—to whom it is no matter what living waters run high or low, reflect the heavenly lights and darknesses, produce their little growth of weeds and flowers, turn here, turn there, are noisy or still, are troubled or at rest, for their course has one sure termination, though their own sources and devices are many."—*Our Mutual Friend.*

Dec. 5.—"Power (unless it be the power of intellect or virtue) has ever the greatest attractions for the lowest natures."—*Our Mutual Friend.*

Dec. 6.—"The poor and wretched, at the worst . . . have some deformed and hunchbacked goodness clinging to them."—*Letter to John Forster.*

Dec. 7.—"A man's thoughts is like the winds, and nobody can't answer for 'em for certain, any length of time together."—*Dombey and Son*—Captain Cuttle.

Dec. 8.—"Time, which strews a man's head with silver, sometimes fills his pockets with gold."—*Public Life of Mr. Tulrumble.*

Dec. 9.—"It is never out of season to protest against that coarse familiarity with sacred things which is busy on the lips, and idle in the heart, or against the confounding of Christianity with any class of persons who, in the words of Swift, have just enough religion to make them hate, and not enough to make them love, one another."—*Preface to Pickwick Papers.* (First cheap edition.)

Dec. 10.—"Why should there be cold and worldly secrets between relations?"—*Martin Chuzzlewit*—Mr. Pecksniff.

Dec. 11.—"Some conjurors say that number three is the magic number, and some say number seven. It's neither, my friend, neither. It's number one."—*Oliver Twist*—Fagin.

Dec. 12.—"It ain't so much that a person goes into Society, as it is that Society goes into a person."—*Going into Society*—Mr. Magsman.

Dec. 13.—"I hold . . . that it is impossible for any fabric of society to go on, day after day, and year after year, from father to son, and from grandfather to grandson, punishing men for not engaging in the pursuit of virtue, and for the practice of crime, without showing them what virtue is and where it can be found—in justice, religion, and truth."—*Speech at Birmingham.*

Dec. 14.—"Women are contradictory creatures in some things, but their hearts are soft and kind."—*David Copperfield*—Mr. Omer.

Dec. 15.—"There ith a love in the world, not all Thelf-intereth after all, but thomething very different."—*Hard Times*—Mr. Sleary.

Dec. 16.—"I felt that the world was not utterly to be despised; that it was worthy of living in for many reasons."—*Speech at Edinburgh.*

Dec. 17.—"Show me the man who says anything against women, as women, and I boldly declare he is not a man."—*Pickwick Papers*—Mr. Snodgrass.

Dec. 18.—"There are not a few among the disciples of charity who require in their own vocation scarcely less excitement than the votaries of pleasure in theirs; and hence it is that diseased sympathy and compassion are every day expended on out-of-the-way objects, when only too many demands upon the legitimate exercise of the same virtues in a healthy state are constantly within the sight and hearing of the most unobservant person alive. In short, charity must have its romance, as the novelist or playwright must have his."—*Nicholas Nickleby.*

Dec. 19.—"It is a sad thing to see a little deformed child sitting apart from other children, who are active and merry, watching the games he is denied the power to share in."—*Nicholas Nickleby*—Tim Linkinwater.

Dec. 20.—"So cheerful of spirit and guiltless of affectation, as true practical Christianity ever is."—*Uncommercial Traveller.*

Dec. 21.—"In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived, and so finely felt, as injustice."—*Great Expectations.*

Dec. 22.—"I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letters here or there."—*Will.*

Dec. 23.—"That man must be a misanthrope indeed in whose heart something like a jovial feeling is not roused—in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened by the recurrence of Christmas."—*Sketches by Boz.*

Dec. 24.—"Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days, that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and can transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own friends and his quiet home."—*Pickwick Papers.*

Dec. 25.—"There are people who will tell you that each succeeding Christmas is not to them what it used to be, that each succeeding Christmas has found some cherished hope, or happy prospect of the year before, dimmed or passed away: that

the present only serves to remind them of reduced circumstances and straitened incomes—of the feasts they once bestowed on hollow friends, and of the cold looks that meet them now, in adversity and misfortune. Never heed such dismal recollections. There are few men who have lived long enough in the world who cannot call up such thoughts any day in the year. Then do not select the merriest of the three hundred and sixty-five for your doleful recollections, but draw your chair nearer the blazing fire—fill the glass and send round the song—if your room be smaller than it was a dozen years ago, or if your glasses be filled with reeking punch instead of sparkling wine, put a good face on the matter and empty it off-hand and fill another, and troll off the old ditty you used to sing, and thank God it's no worse. Look on the merry faces of your children (if you have any) as they sit round the fire. One little seat may be empty; one slight form that gladdened the father's heart, and roused the mother's pride to look upon, may not be there. Dwell not upon the past. Think not that one short year ago the fair child now resolving into dust sat before you with the bloom of health upon its cheek and the gaiety of infancy in its joyous eye. Reflect upon your present blessings—of which every man has many—not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some. Fill your glass again, with a merry face and contented heart. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be merry and your new year a happy one."—*Sketches by Boz.*

Dec. 27.—"Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through (as it ought) and that the prejudices and passions which deform our better nature were never called into action among those to whom they should ever be strangers."—*Sketches by Boz.*

Dec. 28.—"Christmas comes but once a year—which is unhappily too true, for when it begins to stay with us the whole year round we shall make this earth a very different place."—*The Seven Poor Travellers.*

Dec. 29.—"When we come suddenly in a crowded street upon the careworn features of a familiar face—crossing us like the ghost of pleasant times long forgotten—let us not recall those features with pain, in sad remembrance of what they once were, but let us go back a pace or two to meet it once again, as that of a friend who has beguiled us of a moment of care, who has taught us to sympathise with virtuous grief, cheating us to tears for sorrows not our own—and we all know how pleasant are such tears."—*Speech in London.*

Dec. 30.—"The society of girls is a very delightful thing."—*David Copperfield*—Tommy Traddles.

Dec. 31.—"Everything has an end. Even young ladies in love can't read their love letters for ever."—*Barnaby Rudge.*

POETICAL TRIBUTES TO CHARLES DICKENS

XII.

ON HIS "CHRISTMAS CAROL"

HONOUR to Genius! when its lofty speech
Stirs through the soul, and wakes its echoing strings;
But honour tenfold! when its day-words reach
The selfish heart, and there let loose the springs
Of pity, gushing blood-warm from a breach
Rent in its close-bound stony coverings.
Yes! tenfold honour, and the love of men,
The kind, the good, attend on Genius then,
And bless and sanctify those words divine.
Such words, Charles Dickens, truly have been thine;
And thou hast earn'd true glory with all love;
Long may the torch of Christmas gladly shine
Upon thy home, while voices from above
Music thy Carol, and again impart
Mirth and good tidings to the poor man's heart.

The Illuminated Magazine, 1844. W. W. G.

DICKENS'S KINDNESS OF HEART

By LADY FLORENCE DIXIE

I WAS a very little child when I first saw Dickens, and he died not long after that time. He used to visit my grandfather, General Sir William Robert Clayton, at Harleyford,* and knew my mother well. One day, tired with playing with my twin brother, I left this latter by the Thames side, and wandering about, came upon Dickens sitting reading. Coming to his side, I stood and looked at him, saying, "Tired. Please read to me." He smiled, and took me on his knee. Then he told me the story of Little Nell. When he had finished, I lay quite still and fell asleep, and when I awoke he was sitting also quite still so as not to awake me. This shows his kindness of heart, for I must have seriously interfered with his reading and leisure. This is just a little glimpse from a life—a snapshot.

* Harleyford lies just above Temple House and near Great Marlow, on the Thames.

DICKENSIANA MONTH BY MONTH

BOOKS

A Christmas Carol (*Kristnaska Sonorado*) *Kristnaska Rakonto de la Glora Angla Autoro Charles Dickens.* Esperantizita de Martyn Westcott. *Review of Reviews* Office, London. 1s. net, paper ; 1s. 6d. net, cloth.

A Christmas Carol. Embellished with eight plates from drawings by Charles Pears. London : The Library Press, 9 Duke Street, Charing Cross. 2s. net.

A Pickwick Calendar and Greeting Card for 1906. London : O. Anacker. 6d. each.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES

"An Appreciation of Dickens." By Wilson Crewdson. *Hastings and St. Leonard's Advertiser*, 26 October.

"Charles Dickens : Social Reformer." By W. J. F. *The Co-operative News*, 28 October.

"The Passing of Sikes." *Outlook*, 28 October.

"Edwin Drood Again." By J. Cuming Walters. *Academy*, 28 October.

"Mr. Lang : the Disentangler." By Walter Herries Pollock. *Evening Standard*, 30 October.

"Mr. Lang Detecting Again." By G. K. Chesterton. *Daily News.* 2 November.

"The Mysteries of Edwin Drood." *Times*, 27 October. Letters on the same from Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A., 3 November, and Mr. Andrew Lang, 10 November.

"Dickens's London." Four-page illustrated supplement. *Black and White*, 4 November.

"Buttoned-up Men" (Turnover). *The Globe*, 6 November.

"Edwin Drood : Solutions to the Mystery." By Henry Smetham. *Rochester and Chatham Journal*, 18 November.

PICTORIAL POST CARDS

Oliver Twist. Six cards of Characters in the Play. Rotary Photo Co. 2d. each.

Homes of Literary Men. A set of six cards, including one of Dickens. No. 9098. Raphael Tuck and Co.

Irving as "Jingle." Beagles and Co., 9 Little Britain, E.C. 2d.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

LONDON

THE first of the ordinary monthly meetings of the session was held on 1 November at the Memorial Hall. Unfortunately the weather was most unfavourable, but this notwithstanding, there was a good attendance. Mr. W. Teignmouth Shore gave a lecture on "Dickens and Walking." The subject is a most comprehensive one, and Mr. Shore dealt with it in the most interesting manner, holding his audience from beginning to end. Mr. Arthur Waugh was in the chair, and before introducing the lecturer made appropriate reference to the late Sir Henry Irving. He also appealed for contributions to the National Dickens Library Fund. During the evening Mr. Howard Rose gave an excellent recitation of David Copperfield's walk to Dover.

THE NEEDLEWORK AND CHARITABLE GUILD

THE Sale of Work and Entertainment in aid of the Guild funds will be opened at 3 o'clock on 6 December, at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, E.C., by Mr. Arthur W. à Beckett. Canon Benham will take the chair, and several other Vice-Presidents of the Fellowship—including members of the President's family—have signified their intention of being present. As Mr. à Beckett will only be able to remain a short time, we hope all desirous of being present at the opening will be at the hall a little before 3 o'clock. Mr. W. Miles has kindly promised to recite during the afternoon, and there will be a varied and attractive programme throughout. Flowers for the flower-stall may be sent to the Institute on Tuesday or Wednesday morning. The remaining tickets should be applied for at once—1s. each to admit to opening; 6d. each to admit after 7 o'clock.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP DRAMATIC CLUB

As announced in our last issue, the first performance will be given on 19 December at the Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C., when the "Trial Scene" from *Pickwick* will be given, and "The Gentleman in the Next House," adapted from *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Reserved seats (5s. and 2s. 6d.) can still be booked at headquarters or direct from the Hon. Secretary, Walter Dexter, 40 Ommaney Road, New Cross, S.E. Admission to unreserved parts is 1s. As there are only a few seats left, application should be made for them without delay.

BIRMINGHAM AND DISTRICT BRANCH

THE first meeting of the present session was held at the new headquarters the Great Western Hotel, on Friday, 3 November, at 8 o'clock. The President of the branch for the forthcoming session (Mr. Edward J. Timings) gave a short address on "The Parent Society," its progress and success, and remarked that the information he had to give was gained by personal intercourse with the parent society as representative of the branch. Attention was called to the suggested scheme for purchasing the "Kitton" Collection of Dickens works, commentaries, etc. This branch has started a subscription to assist this object. Mr. Timings also called attention to the useful work done by the Needlework Guild. The Chairman, Mr. G. Davis, followed with an excellent paper on the original and first editions of the master's works. The meeting closed by a reading of "Dr. Marigold" by Mr. Bosworth, and the usual vote of thanks concluded the gathering.

BLACKHEATH, LEE, AND LEWISHAM BRANCH

THE annual general meeting was held at the Obelisk Hall, Lewisham, on 23 October, under the chairmanship of Mr. W. Whiter. After an opening address by the Chairman, the financial and other interests of the society were discussed. A ballot was taken for officers for the Ladies' Needlework Committee and the General Committee, the result thereof being the election of the undermentioned :— Ladies' Needlework Committee : Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. Lewis, and Mrs. Card. General Committee : Mr. Whiter, Mr. Matthews, Mrs. Hubble, Mr. Duggan, and Mr. Hearne. The other officers remain as before. It was announced that meetings of the society would be held this year on Monday, which is more convenient than Friday. Among those present were the Mayor and Mayoress of Lewisham (Mr. and Mrs. T. J. White).

BRIGHTON BRANCH

ENCOURAGED by the unqualified success which attended Mr. Frank Speaight's last visit, the Brighton branch engaged him to give his dramatic recital of *David Copperfield* at the Y.M.C.A. on 29 October, and the recital afforded interest and enjoyment to a large audience. In the chair was Mr. Henry Davey, who has kindly offered prizes for readings and recitations. The conditions provide that each competitor shall do five minutes' reciting and five minutes' reading from selected pieces. The competitions are to take place at the January meeting, and the distribution of awards will be made at the first February meeting.

BRIXTON BRANCH

ON Monday, 23 October, a meeting was held in the Ladies' Parlour, Brixton Independent Church, with Mr. Sidney Marriott in the chair. Mr. Robert Allbut was elected the representative of the branch for the London Council of the Fellowship. The evening's programme was arranged by Mr. R. J. Block. "The Career of Richard Doubledick" was divided into two parts, and given by Mr. R. J. Block with appropriate force and pathos. At the conclusion of the second part of the reading, some remarks—critical and appreciative—were offered by Messrs. Marriott and Allbut.

EDINBURGH AND LEITH BRANCH

THE annual business meeting of the above branch was held on Thursday evening, 19 October, at 5 St. Andrews Square, when the usual business was transacted, reports being received and approved and the office-bearers for the year elected.

On Thursday, 26 October, the opening lecture of the session was delivered to a crowded audience by Mr. Oliphant Smeaton in the Goold Hall, the subject being "Some Saints and Some Sinners," by Charles Dickens. Mr. Smeaton's admirable address was listened to with much interest. In concluding, he said that at least three-fourths of the power which Dickens has shown in his own sphere in the delineation of character arose from the fact that he had taught a love of virtue and a hatred of vice by contrasting with startling vividness the lives of the virtuous and the vicious.

The meeting held on 9 November was the first of the series of members' nights to be given this session—devoted to our special subjects of study for the year, i.e. *Bleak House* and the Christmas Books. The President, the Rev. James Stevenson, read a paper entitled "The Dead Sea of Chancery," in which he gave a critical and historical analysis of the abuses of the Court of Chancery as they existed in the novelist's time, and which it was his aim to expose in *Bleak House*. Mr. D. W. Gunn read a carefully detailed paper on "Jo," treating the well-known character of the poor waif critically and sympathetically. Both papers were much appreciated and enjoyed.

HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS BRANCH

THE annual general meeting of the branch was held at the Queen's Hotel on Thursday, 19 October. Mr. W. Crewdson presided.

Mr. Hoad read the report, which stated the society was started in October, 1904, with 112 members, and the season concluded in April with 153 on the books. Mr. Tyler presented his balance sheet, which showed a balance in hand of 13s. 6d. The total receipts were £23. 13s. 11d., and in addition to the other expenditure £2 had been sent to the Nursing Association, £2. 2s. to Ore Penny Dinner Fund, and £2. 2s. to the Children's Boot Fund. Mr. Crewdson was elected President; Major Freeman Thomas, M.P., and Mr. Harvey du Cros, were re-elected Vice-Presidents; Mr. W. F. Tyler was re-appointed Hon. Treasurer, and Mr. Hoad Hon. Secretary, reference being made to the excellent work of the latter during the last twelve months. The new President read a short paper on Charles Dickens, which was full of interest. An interesting programme was afterwards carried out, and a very enjoyable evening was spent by the members.

HULL BRANCH

THE first public meeting of the newly formed Hull branch was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Mortimer Petty, B.A., in St. Jude's Schoolroom, when upwards of seventy admirers of the great novelist assembled. Mr. Petty gave a very able speech, in which he warned admirers of Dickens against being content to find their enjoyment merely in the inimitable characters of his various works. The chief idea of this branch must be to bring lovers of England's national novelist together in a common bond of friendship, with the avowed object of spreading the love of humanity which permeates all his writings, and to give practical effect to his teachings by following the example he set.

During the evening Mr. Ellison gave a capital rendering of the speech by Serjeant Buzfuz, which was much appreciated. Mr. Holgate Ellison was appointed Hon. Secretary and Mr. F. Bacon Hon. Treasurer.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH

ON Thursday, 26 October, the second meeting of the present session was held in the Common Hall, Hackins Hey, when Mr. John Lee, B.A., brilliantly lectured on "The Possibilities of the Modern Novel," advising his hearers to study the methods of James and Barrie, both forerunners of the novel of the future. Mr. C. P. Mitchell was elected Hon. Secretary of the branch.

MANCHESTER BRANCH

AT the November meeting, Mr. G. F. Gadd read a paper on *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The keynote of the book, he remarked, was the vice of selfishness, and the note of tragedy was struck with extraordinary power. Jonas Chuzzlewit was a worse miscreant than even Bill Sikes. The comedy of the book was, however, no less admirable than its tragedy, *Pickwick* alone ranking above it in point of humour. With many an apt quotation Mr. Gadd emphasized and enforced the essential features of the work.

Nearly thirty new members have been enrolled this session. A Ladies' Committee, with Mrs. Albert Nicholson as President, has been formed to arrange the details of the Sale of Work in aid of the funds of the Crippled Children's Home at Marple. Miss Annie Chadwick is the Hon. Secretary, and Mrs. John Harwood the Hon. Treasurer.

Mr. A. Humphreys, Hon. Secretary of the branch, gave a lantern lecture at the Queen Street (Salford) Institute, on 6 November, entitled "A Night with Dickens," when he referred at length to the aims and objects of the Fellowship. Mr. Frank Speaight and Mr. Arthur W. Hayes have recently given Dickens recitals in Manchester.

MELBOURNE BRANCH

THE first annual meeting was held on 4 September, 1905. In the absence of the President, Sir John Madden, the Rev. Professor Rentoul, D.D., occupied the chair, and delivered a stirring and eloquent address on the life and work of the master, which greatly delighted the large audience. Dr. Rentoul is a professor at the Melbourne University, and at the present time is giving a course of public lectures on "English Imaginative Literature —Victorian Era," embracing Dickens, Tennyson, Thackeray, George Eliot, Robert Browning, and Elizabeth B. Browning.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Sir John Madden, K.C.M.G.; Vice-Presidents, Rev. E. Rorke, B.A., Mr. A. P. Du Soir, Mr. Frank Scrivenor, Mr. Fred W. Scrivenor, Mr. H. Gyles Turner, Rev. Professor Rentoul, D.D.; Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. H. Crowther; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. N. B. Newland, A.I.A.V.; Hon. Auditors, Mr. W. Milroy Walker and Mr. J. D. Harrison.

After the business had been transacted, the following programme was performed: Scene from *Bleak House*, by Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Windas; Lady Dedlock's interview with Tulkinghorne; recital from *Hard Times*, by Rev. E. Rorke, "Release of Stephen Blackpool."

NOTTS BRANCH

THE opening meeting was held on Friday evening, 20 October, in the Mechanics' Institution, the Rev. H. T. Hayman, of Edwinstowe, occupying the chair. In reply to an invitation from the branch to Mr. Bransby Williams, who was giving impersonations of Dickens's characters at the Empire, the following letter was received by the Hon. Secretary:—

> "I regret that I cannot be present to help you to push the Fellowship boat off for the New Year voyage. I should much like to have addressed the members. I sincerely hope that your membership may be doubled, and that each member may be able to induce a friend to read and re-read Dickens, and that each new reader may then become a member. If this were done in each branch we should soon double our band of 'Dickens Lovers.' I am delighted to find my delineations of his characters are being received better than ever all over the country. Convey my heartiest wishes to your Chairman, and also through me accept the love of dear John L. Toole, who is so sad and broken-hearted at the loss of his comrade, our dead chief. I had the privilege of dining with him a few weeks ago. Any resolution you may pass in sympathy with us and dear Mr. Toole I will convey to him to cheer him. Now let me conclude, with love to you all, and, in the words of Tiny Tim, 'God bless us every one.'"

The Rev. H. T. Hayman was re-elected President of the branch and Mr. S. H. Edwards Hon. Secretary. Several new members were enrolled.

The second meeting was held in the Mechanics' Institution on Monday, 6 November. Mr. J. Potter Briesoe occupied the chair. The Rev. H. Telford Hayman gave a capital lecture on the *Pickwick Papers*, following the sporting movements of the four friends from the beginning to the end of the book. It was much enjoyed by those present. About twenty new members were enrolled, and the following gentlemen were elected: Vice-Presidents, Mr. A. W. Hayes, Rev. F. W. Paul, M.A., Mr. J. C. Snaith, and Mr. J. T. Spalding, J.P.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH

THE annual meeting was held in the Mayor's Banqueting Room at the Town Hall on 24 October, Alderman A. L. Emanuel, J.P., the President, in the chair.

On the proposition of the Chairman, the Mayor, Sir George Couzens, was elected President for the ensuing year. In returning thanks the Mayor said he was proud to be the President of a society which had done such excellent work in the past. He attended the birthday tea to the 800 poor children on the pier that year, and admired the practical and philanthropic way in which Dickens's memory was perpetuated. The Fellowship could be proud of its three years' work, and he trusted it would go on and prosper.

A hearty vote of thanks was given to Alderman Emanuel for his services during the past three years, and his many acts of kindness to all the poor and afflicted were referred to. The following were elected Vice-Presidents for the ensuing year: Mr. T. A. Bramsdon, J.P., Mr. A. H. Lee, M.P., Alderman Scott Foster, J.P., Mr. R. Lucas, M.P., Alderman Power, Mr. W. J. Groves, Mr. A. W. White, J.P., Colonel Holbrook, J.P., and Major-General Chads, C.B. Mr. Percy Maggs was re-elected Hon. Secretary and Mr. W. R. Davison appointed Hon. Treasurer.

ROCHESTER BRANCH

AT the last meeting, held on 2 November, Mr. H. Smetham read a paper on *Edwin Drood*, in which he traversed the various solutions to the mystery which have recently attracted so much attention. At the end of his paper Mr. Smetham propounded a new idea regarding Datchery, whom he gives good reasons for considering Tartar. This same idea is the subject of an article by Mr. G. F. Gadd, which the editor has had in hand some time and hopes to publish shortly. Mr. Smetham's paper occupies over two columns in the *Rochester and Chatham Journal* of 17 November, and it would be an injustice to him to attempt to summarize it here.

SHEFFIELD BRANCH

THE members held a meeting at the Cutlers' Hall on 27 October. About 150 members were present. The President (the Rev. V. W. Pearson) presided at the commencement, but as he had to leave shortly afterwards, his place was taken by Mr. R. W. Dodsworth. The following ladies and gentlemen provided a highly enjoyable programme: Mr. C. R. Smith, reading, "Mr. and Mrs. Squeers at Home"; Miss Mawson, recitation, "Tammas's Goose"; Mr. T. W. Padmore, reading, "Death of Nell"; Miss L. H. Rhodes, a reading from *Pickwick Papers;* Miss H. Roberts, recitation, "My Daughter Belle"; and Mr. G. W. Parker, a paper on "Blobbs of Wadham," a sketch which has recently been erroneously attributed to Dickens. At the close of the meeting an appeal was made to the members to support in every possible way the project to provide free dinners for poor children during the winter.

WEST LONDON SUBURBAN BRANCH

"A CHAT on Dickens as an Observer" was the title of an extremely interesting lecture delivered by Mr. W. Chevob at the meeting of this branch held on 3 November at Ealing. The lecturer said that Dickens's keen observation detected things which an ordinary observer would not see, and his descriptions for that reason provided new matter for thought quite as much as did the penetrating observation of Herbert Spencer in another field. This was illustrated by two examples from *Dombey and Son*, describing the coming of the railway to the neighbourhood of Staggs's Gardens, Camden Town. Dickens also displayed the same intuitive discrimination in his descriptions of character, even the names expressing in a singular manner the peculiarities of the characters to whom they belonged. Dickens's descriptions never struck one as being laboured, and he used terms and images connected with the occupations of his characters with great skill and effect. Mr. Chevob illustrated his lecture by readings from the works.

STOCKPORT BRANCH

THE Stockport Sunday-school branch of the Dickens Fellowship opened its winter session on 3 November, when Mr. J. H. Pilkington read a highly appreciative paper on *Pickwick*, throughout which he maintained a fine vein of humour, for which Dickens is so famous. During the last fifty years the sale of these works had never flagged. In the discussion which followed, the Chairman, Mr. W. Marsland, commenting on the paper, said that the greatest study of mankind was "man," and one of the best acquirements for a young man was a study of Dickens, for he was one of the greatest students of human nature. He had found it invaluable. Mr. Catlow said Dickens's books were written at a time when a man was allowed to live, not when hustle, bustle, and hurry were the most important things in life. The Secretary, Mr. W. Hatfield, was elected representative to the General Council.

YORK BRANCH

WITH its October meeting the above branch entered on the fourth year of its existence. Mr. Medd, the Secretary, gave an interesting paper on "The Dickens Fellowship: its Achievements and Possibilities," tracing its history from its inception to the present day. On 8 November Miss Perry gave a very able paper on "Charles Dickens and the Bible." She traced, through the works and characters of the novelist, the great influence the Bible had upon Dickens and all he wrote, and gave instances of the immense value Dickens set upon the New Testament. The paper was interesting and informing. A discussion ensued, in which Mr. Grimes, Mr. Medd, and others took part. The chair was occupied by Mr. H. A. Skerry.

LEEDS BRANCH

ON 14 October Mr. John Hartop dealt with a Shakespearean subject, "The Moral Teachings of Macbeth," and on 28 October Mr. A. P. Snodgrass read a delightfully gossipy paper on "Some old Inns mentioned by Dickens." On 11 November Miss Ethel Kidson took charge of the meeting, and produced what she called a "miscellany night." Its programme was formed by the following items: Character impersonation from Dickens, by Mr. Holgate Ellison, very cleverly managed under disadvantageous conditions (Mr. Ellison, by the way, is the Secretary of the Hull branch); a Scottish sketch, by Mr. Alexander Watt; a paper by Mr. P. Cope on "George Borrow," full of literary and critical ability; "Childermass," a charming and delicate fantasy by Miss Gilchrist, of Southport; and "A Fellowship Dolly," by Miss Ethel Kidson—being the autobiography of an unfortunate doll who squinted, but who, in spite of this physical deformity, found its way into the heart of the little Leeds slum child who was its recipient.

One of the great evenings of the Leeds Fellowship was 8 November, when the members of the branch invited Mr. Harry Furniss (who was giving a lecture on "Boz" in Leeds) to supper. The "swarry" was held at the Liberal Club, and the excellent menu provided exceeded the historic "boiled leg of mutton and trimmings" of *Pickwick*. The toasts of "The King," "Our Guest," "The Memory of Charles Dickens," "The Chairman," "The Dickens Fellowship," and "The Ladies" were given and duly drunk. Mr. Harry Furniss expressed himself as delighted at meeting the members of the branch, and in a most interesting speech showed what a thorough Dickensian he was. He had most kindly allowed the menu card to be adorned with one of his clever sketches, and a most enjoyable evening was passed.

DIARY OF DICKENS MEETINGS.

Dec. 1. West London Branch: "Dickens and Christmas," by Mr. J. W. T. Ley, at Municipal Buildings, Ealing, at 8.15.
,, 1. Manchester Branch: "Dickens's Lawyers," by Mr. W. H. Vaughan, at Accountants' Hall, at 7.30.
,, 1. Stockport Branch: "Dickens and Christmas," by Mrs. Dawson, and "The Dickens Country," by Mr. W. Hatfield.
,, 6. Needlework Guild: Sale of Work at St. Bride's Institute, Bride Lane, E.C. Opened by Mr. A. W. à'Beckett, at 3.
,, 7. London: Recital of *A Christmas Carol*, by Mr. E. Speaight, at Memorial Hall. Chairman, Mr. Arthur Waugh. Admission free. Collection on behalf of the Fellowship's Charitable Funds, at 7.30.
,, 7. Liverpool Branch: Whist Drive and Dance, at Assembly Rooms, Hardman Street.
,, 9. Leeds Branch: "The Law and Lawyers of Dickens," by Mr. F. G. Jackson, at Church Institute, at 7.30.
,, 11. Winnipeg Branch: Discussion, "American Notes."
,, 11. Leyton Branch: Meeting at Wesleyan Schoolroom, High Street, Leyton, to form branch. Lecture Recital: "Scenes and Characters from Dickens," by Mr. Watson Thornton, at 7.30.
,, 13. Rochester Branch: Recital of *A Christmas Carol*, by Mr. F. Speaight, at Castle Hall, at 8.
,, 13. Forest Gate Branch: Members' Night at Public Hall, at 8.15.
,, 15. Birmingham Branch: Dickens Christmas Social Gathering, at Great Western Hotel, Colmore Road, at 8.
,, 16. Leeds Branch: "Mystery of Edwin Drood," by Mr. F. G. Furniss, at Church Institute, at 7.30.
,, 16. Brighton Branch: "Mystery of Edwin Drood," by Mr. H. Davey. Readings by Mr. F. J. Gauntlett, at Steine House.
,, 18. Chelsea: Lecture on "Dickens and Christmas," by Mr. J. W. T. Ley, at Markham Square Church, at 8.30.
,, 18. Southampton Branch: Readings by Rev. W. T. Martin and others. Address by President, at Kell Memorial Hall, at 8.
,, 18. Shrewsbury Branch: Recital of *A Christmas Carol*, by Mr. F. Speaight.
,, 19. Dramatic Club: Performance of *Pickwick* "Trial Scene" and "The Gentleman in the Next House," Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C., at 8.
,, 19. Bristol Branch: Discussion, "Christmas Books and Christmas Stories." Introduction by Mr. C. Andrews, at C.M.S. Hall, Park Street, at 7.30.
,, 20. Winnipeg Branch: Christmas Entertainment.
,, 29. Sheffield Branch: Monthly Meeting at Cutlers' Hall, at 8.

NATIONAL DICKENS LIBRARY

THE following subscriptions have been received for above since our last issue: J. C. Parkinson, 21s.; O. Sack, 10s.; Miss Georgina Hogarth, Sir C. T. Skelton, and E. P. Thompson, 5s. each; per Rochester Branch, 4s.; E. G. V. Runting, Anon., G. W. Parker, A. Charlesworth, J. H. Wild, Sir Jos. Jones, T. W. Padmore, J. G. Taylor, Miss A. M Westley, Jones and Evans, 2s. 6d. each; W. Leggett, per Manchester Branch, 2s. each; M. P. Guimaraens, 1s. 6d.; Miss N. M. Godwin, J. Mascull, X., E. J. Timings, Miss Reading, Miss E. M. Reading, Miss M. L. Reading, E. Howell, Mrs. M. Janes, Mr. Meatyard, W. T. Whittaker, Miss A. Hughes, and A. J. Chinnery, 1s. each.

Messrs. Wells Gardner, Darton, and Co. have sent us a copy of their reprint of Story-Lives of Great Authors devoted to Charles Dickens. It is an excellent and lucid account of the life and work of Dickens, and is embellished with a portrait and some delightful little pictures depicting scenes and incidents of his career. A Bibliography is added. The price is 6d. net.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. LUKE FILDES, THE "DROOD" MYSTERY, AND MR. LANG

SIR,—The significance of the letter on "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" which Mr. Luke Fildes sent to the *Times* on 3 November, can scarcely be overestimated. It has a literary and a personal interest. It proves, finally and conclusively, that no solution of the mystery can henceforth be accepted which does not include the idea that Edwin Drood was killed by his uncle, John Jasper; and it vindicates Dickens's character for truthfulness and sincerity in dealing with the few who were associated with him in this last work. To those who revere Charles Dickens, this personal vindication, which might have been deemed unnecessary until the controversy on *Edwin Drood* arose, will be particularly welcome.

But it is not wholly a question of sentiment. The so-called "hints" were explicit declarations to three separate persons. Forster was told that Drood was to be murdered; Mr. Luke Fildes learnt that Jasper had killed Drood; and the late Charles Dickens *fils* was told that Drood was dead. The last statement was published in Mr. W. R. Hughes's *Week's Tramp in Dickens Land*, but I also had it from Mr. Hughes direct. He ascertained that Mr. Fildes was "convinced that Dickens intended that Drood should be murdered by his uncle"; and to this he added—"Mr. Charles Dickens informs me that Mr. Fildes is right, and that Edwin Drood was dead. His (Mr. Dickens's) father told him so himself." In the face of such definite assertions, all to one and the same effect, ought we ever to have doubted the literal meaning of Dickens's words? Mr. Fildes has now placed the matter beyond controversy, and has incidentally aided materially in solving the problem of the half-told tale. Mr. Lang's contention that by "strangling" Dickens did not intend it to be inferred that Jasper would complete his work or that Drood would die, does not seem to me to be quite worthy of serious consideration, or of refutation in detail.

Yours faithfully,

MANCHESTER, 5 *Nov.*, 1905. J. CUMING WALTERS.

"SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE"

DEAR SIR,—Can a reader of Charles Dickens refer me to the book and chapter in which one character—residing, I think, at Baynes Row, Clerkenwell (the houses opposite the House of Correction, going from Mount Pleasant to Exmouth Street)—uses the words to another, "Something to his advantage"?

Mr. Pancks, in chapter XIII., p. 101, of *Little Dorrit*, in answer to the question by Mr. Clennam of "You are no great reader?" replies, "Never read anything but letters and accounts. Never collect anything but advertisements relative to next of kin. If that's a taste, I have got that." This clearly shows Mr. Pancks to have been a Next of Kin Agent, and he should be so described in *The Dickens Dictionary*, but he is only described there as a Rent Collector. W. J. GADSDEN.

19 MIDDLE LANE, CROUCH END, N., 18 *Nov.*, 1905.

ETHEL BRET HARTE ASSISTANCE FUND

MR. L. C. ALEXANDER wishes to acknowledge, with many thanks, the following further subscriptions to the above fund from our readers: "Mrs. Nickleby," 5s.; and sums of 1s. each from "Literary Man with a Wooden Leg," "Sir Dingley Dabber," "Sir Barnett Skettles," "Sir Tumley Snuffim," Mr. and Mrs. Cheesning, Mrs. Raddy, "Sairey Gamp," "Mrs. Harris," "My old friend Pergityes," and "Revd. W. Stiggins."